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The Mission of Saving Mercy.

A

SERMON

DELIVERED AT NEWBURYPORT, DEC. 30, 1856,

ON OCCASION OF THE

INSTALLATION OF REV. HEMAN R. TIMLOW,

AS PASTOR OF THE

HARRIS ST. (PRESBYTERIAN) CHURCH,

BY WILLIAM HENRY GREEN,

PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, PRINCETON, N. J.

WITH THE CHARGE,

BY REV. DANIEL DANA, D. D.

NEWBURYPORT:

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NEWBURYPORT, Dec. 30, 1856.

REV. PROF. GREEN—Dear Sir :—

Being very much gratified with both the spirit and matter of your "Installation Sermon" delivered this day, and there being a general desire among those to whom it was addressed to have it put in a more permanent form, we do most earnestly request a copy for publication.

Yours, very truly,

DANIEL DANA,
HEMAN R. TIMLOW,
A. G. VERMILYE.

NEWBURYPORT, Dec. 31, 1856.

REV. DR. DANA AND MESSRS. TIMLOW AND VERMILYE :—

I am surprised by your totally unexpected request. A prudent regard for my reputation would lead me to insist upon the negative given in its first presentation. I cannot, however, refuse your desire to have a memento of that interesting occasion in which it was my happiness to participate. May the blessing of the Highest rest upon a pastoral union so auspiciously formed.

Truly yours,

W. HENRY GREEN.

S E R M O N .

LUKE 4 : 18, 19.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE HATH ANOINT-
ED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR ; HE HATH SENT
ME TO HEAL THE BROKEN HEARTED, TO PREACH DELIVERANCE
TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERING OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND,
TO SET AT LIBERTY THEM THAT ARE BRUISED, TO PREACH THE
ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD.

These words contain, as appears from the application of them immediately added by our Lord himself, an exposition of his earthly mission. This was the commission which he received from the Father; this the reason why he was anointed with the Spirit above measure; this the errand upon which he came into the world. It was wholly one of love and of compassion to the suffering and them that had no helper. It was the annunciation and the actual bestowment of every form of blessing,—the removal of every form of misery, and comprehensive of the whole the restoration of God's favor to them by whom it had been lost. The poor, the broken hearted, the captives, the blind, the bruised are named in the text, not as the only class of sufferers for whom Jesus felt compassion and to whom he offered and brought relief,—not as mere figures for the necessities and woe-worn of an entirely different character, who were alone regarded, but as instances and representatives of the entire body of the needy and the miserable,—as specific cases of that suffering and sorrow which with an endless diversity of forms

covers the world, for the whole of which he felt compassion, and for each form of which he administered relief. It was to every token of the divine absence, to every symptom of the divine displeasure that he would put an end in introducing the period of God's returning favor, the acceptable year of the Lord. That this passage is to be thus generalized, and that it was intended to be understood as covering more than the bare cases here specifically stated, and as comprehending within the scope of its compassions every human ill, is apparent not only from the uniform statements of other parts of Scripture in relation to the aim and issue of the work of Christ, but from the language of this very passage itself as compared with that of the prophecy from which it is professedly a transcript. It neither confines with rigorous exactness to every word and letter whether of the Old Testament original or of the then widely received Greek translation, which yet it follows in the main,—nor does it even bind itself absolutely to the particular cases there set forth of evils to be remedied. In dealing so freely with this passage as he does, while here transferring it, the evangelist would forbid our cleaving too anxiously to the letter, and incite us to seek the spirit in the applications here and in Isaiah, and in every other possible application. If he has substituted the gospel to the poor for good tidings to the meek,—the recovery of sight to the blind for the opening of the prison to them that are bound,—and if he has incorporated a fresh particular not found in so many words in the language of the prophet, the setting at liberty them that are bruised,—these explain themselves to us at once as deviations from the original, which do not in the slightest affect its sense but only its form, as soon as the full scope and comprehensiveness of the passage is perceived; and this it may have been one aim of these deviations to suggest. So that it is not necessary in our explanation to have recourse to some human infirmity or imperfection in the writer,—it is not necessary to save his good faith at the expense not of his

inspiration merely, but even of his faithful memory or his knowledge of his native tongue, by assuming that he could not recall the precise words of the prophet, or that he did not perceive that his own words did not accurately represent them. And it may be that a careful examination of all the citations of the Old Testament in the New, would reveal more generally than is commonly supposed, that where there are deviations, these can be explained even on the assumption of their having been consciously and intentionally made. They need not be harmless inaccuracies ; they need not be even accidental and unimportant variations ; they may have a reason which it is worth while to search out and discover. They may be suggestive as to the true sense of the passage, or as to some phase of its application , while in both its primary and secondary forms it bears the stamp of that Spirit all whose words are everlasting truth.

The character and aims of the mission of the Lord Jesus are stated in the verses before us. But it must not be supposed that these words had had no representatives, and heavenly mercy to lost men had had no messengers before he appeared. It must not be imagined that prior to the advent of the Son of God in the flesh there had been none anointed and that with the Spirit of the Lord, to this errand of compassionate love ; none to preach the gospel to the poor ; none sent to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that were bruised, or to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. God did all this himself to the first transgressing pair ; and the memory of that word of mercy confirmed, repeated and enlarged by subsequent revelations, saved the pious patriarchs. Upon this very errand all the prophets were commissioned. Nay, the language in which Isaiah describes the office and work of the Great Redeemer, is so appropriate as descriptive of his own, that not a few have referred the words exclusively to him, and

sought for them no other nor higher application. But while neither the words in their original connexion, nor the comment here added by our Lord—"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears"—will admit of their restriction to Isaiah, or to his brethren fellow-prophets, they are strikingly applicable to them. And they are applicable for the same reason that a definition of light descriptive of that derived from the risen sun, would serve equally to define that which proceeded from it while beneath the horizon, or that the statement of the cause for which a leader contends will be true in its application to those who serve under his command. The prophets in their measure preached the Gospel to the poor, healed the broken hearted, and proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord. But their labors were preliminary and restricted, and derived whatever present efficacy they possessed from him that was to come after. Their complete, their highest application these words first found in him who was the Messiah, the Christ, the anointed by way of eminence, in whom all the fulness of the Spirit dwelt; who preached the Gospel to the poor by himself becoming poor, that they might be made rich; who could both promise and give rest to the weary and the heavy laden, who ascending from the grave led forth the captivity captive and granted them deliverance; who could say effectually to the blind, receive your sight, and who brought about as well as proclaimed the year of God's returning favor, the era of peace on earth and good will to men. This was peculiarly the mission of the Lord Jesus. It was his to project the recovery of this lost world, it was his to make its restoration possible, and potentially to effect it by his most perfect mediation. The redeeming work of Christ furnishes the only and the sovereign remedy for all the ravages of sin, and for all men's sorrow, both those which are temporal and those which are spiritual and eternal.

As a farther application of the words before us, it may be added that they are descriptive of the mission of Christianity

considered as a system of divine truths and principles, communicated to the world by the revelations of the Spirit and by the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus, and deriving its efficacy from his atoning work, his continued intercession and the Holy Spirit's agency. This position follows immediately from the former. The mission of the Savior was to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And yet when he ascended to the Father, he left behind him a world still unreconciled to God, still in its pollution, misery and sin. It was filled still with poor to whom no glad tidings had been carried, with captives whose prison doors were barred as tightly, whose fetters were as galling and whose miserable dungeons were as dark and cheerless as ever ; with the broken hearted to whom no voice of the comforter had spoken relief, and with the blind whose sight was as far as ever from being recovered. But judge not from this that his errand was abortive and his work a failure.

The work of the world's recovery was not one begun in a moment and ended in a moment. As there was a protracted period of preparation reaching through many ages and employing various and potent instrumentalities before he came ; so there is needed a protracted period for that scheme which he set in operation and which he still conducts and superintends, to work out its expected and certain consummation. The whole might have been accomplished in an instant had the almighty grace of God so chosen ; and the moment of Christ's triumphant resurrection from the grave might have been signalized by the complete ingathering and perfect sanctification of all God's elect people, by the utter overthrow of Satan's baleful empire, and by the entire and final banishment from earth of sin and its accursed effects. And so, had God chosen, the world might have been created in a moment, and all its forms of beauty

and its innumerable orders of creatures sprung instantaneously into being, instead of being gradually evolved through six successive days. But thus God did not work in creation ; nor did he in redemption.

By Christ's personal ministry on earth and his mediatorial work here performed, expiation was made for human sin, and a basis was made for its complete removal with the endless train of woes and miseries it had introduced, and for a full and lasting reconciliation with God, with all the present and eternal blessings which are to follow from it. The grand work was achieved by him in his life and his vicarious death of laying a firm foundation, such as no storm can shake, no flood can overflow, whereupon the glorious temple of living stones might be erected. He obtained complete redemption. But it remains that this should be applied. This application, as well as its original procurement, falls within the purposes of his mission, as stated in the passage before us. To effect this application, however, it was not necessary that he should remain here personally on earth. It was rather expedient that he should return to the Father. He left behind him the great facts and doctrines of the gospel. These he gave to the world not as a mere system of truth to be learned and received, but fruitful of farther consequences. They are living truths, powerful and efficacious. With the doctrine of a crucified Savior as the centre, and all its other precious truths clustering around that or radiating from it, the gospel of Jesus is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Attended not only by an inherent efficacy elsewhere unknown, and by a power of accompanying motive wholly unequalled, but by the omnipotent energy of the Holy Ghost, it has entered upon its career of triumph under the banner of redeeming love. Whithersoever it comes, it brings salvation. For every need of man it proffers a supply ; for every pain a balm. The gospel forbids us to say of any hurt man has received that it is incurable, or that the

remedies Christianity would furnish are ineffectual in the case. There is no poverty to which it does not come charged with glad tidings, no heart so broken and crushed that it cannot bring healing, no sighing captive that it cannot set at liberty, there are none so under the divine displeasure that it cannot preach to them the acceptable year of the Lord.

To what has been said it may be still further added, that the verses before us are descriptive of the mission of the church of God, as composed of those who have embraced this precious system of saving truth, and stand as its embodiment, its representatives and its champions before the world. Christ accomplishes the salvation of the world from sin and misery by leaving his gospel, attended constantly by his almighty power, to work its way throughout the world. This is not to be done by some divine or superhuman agency presenting the truths of the gospel to every human soul and endeavoring their universal application. The seed of gospel truth was by the great sower cast into the soil of many human hearts. It sprang up and bore fruit ; that fruit was seed—was sown again and a fresh harvest reaped ; and so the work goes on, each harvest multiplying seed and multiplying it again, until the whole earth shall be one vast field of waving grain ready for the grand ingathering to the garner of the skies. The gospel was implanted by Jesus in the hearts of his followers, with the commission : ‘freely ye have received, freely give.’ Every one who has received the gospel of God’s grace into his soul, is not only one redeemed from the power of the enemy, but one commissioned to ransom others ; not only one upon whom the balm of Gilead has begun its work of cure, but a physician, a healer of the hurts and maladies of others ; not only a captive loosed from bonds, but set to the work of breaking the chains of those who wear them still. Every Christian is not a mere passive recipient of the truth and of its saving benefits, but in his measure and according to his station, opportunity and ability, he is set for its

defence and propagation. He is a light kindled that it may shine—salt put into the mass for the preservation of the whole. The gospel is given to the church of God to spread it and apply it everywhere. And this church is in its scriptural, its proper sense, the aggregate of true believers. And what is the work of all, devolves in its measure upon each one; what is the duty of the whole body, must rest with its measure of obligation upon every individual member. The gospel is given to the church as the followers and servants of Christ, that they may instrumentally—though relying alone for efficacy upon his sovereign power and grace—perfect what is yet unfulfilled in his mission. If there be one of broken heart remaining unhealed, one captive undelivered, the church of God has a duty there to perform, and her commission to perform it is written in the words before us. The people of God are responsible for giving this glorious gospel as speedy, as wide and as thorough an application to the necessities of the world as they are able to give it. If, through slothful inaction, want of zeal in the cause of truth, a disbelief in its potency, or through lack of compassion for their sinful and suffering race, they fail to do this, they are unfaithful to the trust committed to them, and are chargeable with the woful results that follow from their unfaithfulness. If there be men perishing unreconciled to God, and they do not make the gospel known to them, when they might make it known, or fail to urge it upon them when it was in their power so to do, they are chargeable with dereliction of their solemn duty. This work of heavenly benevolence is not one in which they may labor if they please, or if they please, forbear; one in which if they engage, their liberality is to be trumpeted as though a work of supererogation had been performed, or if they do nothing, should meet no censure. It is a work of solemn obligation; and to every Christian unemployed in this his bounden duty, comes his Savior's reproving voice—"why stand ye all the day idle? go, work in my vineyard."

If there are those who are seeking to heal their spiritual maladies by some balm of earth's production, ignorant or unmindful of the heavenly virtues of that which can alone effect their cure, it is the duty of the people of God to see that such have pointed out to them the inutility of their own devices, and that they have plainly set before them the fact that what they need to save them is the gospel, the pure gospel and nothing but the gospel.

And as there is no warrant for restricting the redeeming virtue of the gospel solely to what is spiritual and eternal, and excluding from the sphere of its potency that which is temporal; or rather since it is expressly declared, that godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come,—as the gospel is capable of undoing and was intended to undo all the mischiefs of the fall, and to banish suffering and sorrow from this present world as well as deliver from it in the next, the church is God's grand engine of philanthropy. There is not a question bearing on man's amelioration, individual, social or national, in which the church has not an interest, and in whose solution she should not take her share. There is not a cry of distress, that may be suffered to break upon her ear unregarded. She carries in her hand the potent remedy; and she may not, through her culpable inactivity or through her criminal lack of faith in its sovereign efficacy, keep back from suffering men, what Christ has charged her as his almoner with bestowing upon them. She must hold up the gospel which she has received, before the eyes of men, as God's appointed cure for all the evils that are in the world. Nor may she content herself with the mere propounding of its abstract principles, nor with the diligent application of it to one class of man's disorders; as though her caring for one part of her commanded work absolved her from the rest,—as though by caring for men's eternal, she was absolved from all regard for their temporal interests,—as though after proffering eternal salvation to

men, she was thenceforward discharged from farther care for them, and might shut up her bowels of compassion from her suffering and needy brother,—or as though her diligence in seeking the welfare of individual men in their private capacity, released her from all concern in the correction of social evils and the redress of social wrongs. She must not only hold up the gospel in one of its aspects, but hold it up in all,—not only state its principles but search out and exhibit its applications. And especially she must not stand by, indifferent, while men who hate the gospel, and would if they were able banish it from the earth, are grappling with these very questions, and working out results inimical to the gospel and baleful to the truest interests of men. If, with the solution God has in mercy furnished, in her hands, the church fails to hold this up,—and in addition to merely declaring in the general that this is a remedy, fails to go and show its applicability and to press in all its details its application, she is derelict in duty both to God and man.

It has been seen that the text describes the mission of the Old Testament prophets, as the foreshadowing of its second and higher application to the mission of the Lord Jesus ; and that consequent upon this it describes the mission of Christianity and the mission of the church of God,—it remains but to add and thus bring out yet more fully its appositiveness to the present occasion, that it describes the mission of the Christian ministry. They are the organs of the church, charged in a special manner with the realization of its grand idea ; they are ambassadors of Christ specially entrusted with the execution of his high commission. It is theirs to promote in whatever way they most effectually can, the design of the establishment of the church on earth, and of the introduction of Christianity into the world. It is theirs, as the servants of Jesus, to extend, as they are best able, his peaceful and beneficent reign. The only work in which they are called upon to engage, is that which belongs to

the errand upon which the Master himself came. They come as your benefactors, to sympathize with you and relieve you. Not under the bare impulses of a human philanthropy, but with the superadded yearnings of such a sympathy as divine grace alone can give, they come to visit you in your sorrow and affliction and administer consolation. They come to you when weighed down by your sense of sin, and point you to the only Savior. They attend you when weary and faint and discouraged by the difficulties of your heavenward way, and they cheer you on. They come to you sighing beneath Satan's sore temptations and his fiery darts, and they place in your hand the shield and the recovering balm. They come to you perplexed and doubting and filled with fears ; and they prove your guides, your comforters, your friends. Anointed with the Spirit of the Lord they come to preach the gospel to the poor ; they are sent to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

This, then, men and brethren, is the gospel which is brought you through the brother this day set over you in the Lord, this glad tidings for all nations of this sin-ruined world—glad tidings for you and your children. He is sent to bid you that are hungry to a feast. Cast away, ye starving souls, your miserable husks. He bids you to a banquet of rich provisions. Come, for all things are now ready. Eat and drink and live. There is here a full supply, and tasting once you shall never thirst nor hunger more. He is sent to the poor. He comes to make you rich. He brings you a wealth, with which the choicest of silver and the finest of gold are not once to be compared, and jewels more precious than all the diamonds of Golconda. The pinchings of want and the pain of destitution you shall know no more. You shall have a wealth that princes might envy. Such robes shall adorn you as monarchs never wore.

Yes, and your head shall be encircled with a crown, a crown of glory—a crown of glory that fadeth not away. His mission is to the despised, to them of mean descent, whom men look down upon; and you shall have a nobler parentage than that of princely or of royal blood: to you it shall be granted to become sons and daughters of the Monarch of the skies, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He is sent to the sorrowing, and the troubled. He is sent to the stricken mourner, and oh! how the hearts of them that have been bereaved, do often bleed. He is sent to the care-worn, to the disappointed, to the weary and the heavy laden. He is charged to bring you rest, to bring you comfort, to bring you joy. He is bidden to light up the sunken eye, to gladden the heavy heart, to strengthen the weak, to nerve the timid, to cheer the spirit of the fainting and depressed. He is sent to the blind, with such a message as only the gospel of Christ in the omnipotence of its healing power can bring. O, ye that sit in darkness and see no light, ye whose eyes are fast closed, and who have no vision to take in the enrapturing sights of all this magnificence spread out so grandly before you, he is sent to you. It is not to mock your misery. It is not even to upbraid you with being the authors of your own destruction, who have in your madness wantonly destroyed your power to see. But he comes to tell you, and his heart will rejoice while he says it, you shall receive your sight. And ye that are deaf shall hear; and the dumb shall speak, and the lame shall walk, and the sick shall be healed, and the lepers be cleansed, and the very dead shall live. The gospel he is sent to preach shall work such wonders that the world shall hold a general jubilee. Its miseries shall cease, its woes and its sorrows shall be wiped away; crime shall be banished, and all this fair but desolated earth shall be a very Eden. And God, who blessed his works as they came fresh from his creative hand, shall once more pronounce upon them all, that they are very good.

This picture shall be realized, and the gospel shall accomplish the whole. It shall effect more for man than Utopists have ever dreamed. Why does it not effect it now? Why but that men will not embrace it in its power, will not avail themselves of its gracious, its beneficent provisions? There is brought you, my friends, to-day, this glorious gospel of the grace of God. It is now as mighty to save, as omnipotent to deliver as it will be seen to be, and felt to be, when its work on earth is accomplished, and angels and men shall combine to shout the wonders it has wrought. And to every soul of you that shall receive this gospel, it will bring healing for all your disorders, it will change your mourning into rejoicing. It never has failed and it cannot fail. For God's Spirit attends it, and this is the very work which he has given it to do.

CHARGE TO THE PASTOR,

BY REV. DANIEL DANA, D.D.,

FORMER PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

MY DEAR YOUNG BROTHER:—

You are not a stranger to the duties and responsibilities, nor to the mingled anxieties and delights, of a minister of Christ. On a former occasion, you were solemnly ordained to this holy office, by prayer, and the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery. At the same time, you received a charge to be faithful to your important trust. This day a new scene opens before you. You are installed as the Pastor of this beloved flock. Your Savior commits to your care a portion of that church which he has purchased with his own blood. The trust is momentous in itself, and its consequences are everlasting. It is, therefore, obviously proper that you receive a new admonition to be faithful.

First of all, then, we charge you, in the presence of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, *preach the word*. Be instant in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine. Be careful to declare the whole counsel of God.

With great plainness and fidelity, declare from this desk all the doctrines of this Bible—the holy character and government of God—the spirituality and unchanging obligations of his law—the utterly depraved and ruined state of man by nature—the proper and eternal divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ—atonement by his blood—regeneration by his Spirit—justification and eternal life, through faith, by free and sovereign grace. These are the doctrines which stand conspicuous on the very

surface of the Bible. They were declared by apostles and prophets—martyrs have died in their defence. They have ever been dear to pious minds. They constitute, in fact, the substance of this gospel.

Go then, my brother, and whenever you can find a hearing give this precious gospel. Give it to the moral. They need its pardoning and purifying virtues. Give it to the vicious and profane. It can pardon and purify them too. Give it to the learned. It outshines their brightest acquisitions. Give it to the ignorant. It can make them wise unto salvation. Give it to the rich. Without it they are poor indeed. Give it to the poor. It can make them rich for eternity. Give it to the prosperous. It can refine and elevate their joys. Give it to the afflicted. It can soothe and bless their sorrows.

Delight to expatiate on the mediatorial glories of Christ, and on the unsearchable riches of his grace. Invite sinners to his blood as the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Press the invitation by every argument drawn from the wonderful scheme of redemption, from the compassion of a Savior's heart, and from the unknown transport or terror of his final appearance as the Judge.

Insist much and often on the *nature*, the *necessity*, and the *evidences* of regeneration, of repentance toward God, of faith in Jesus Christ, and of that genuine love to God and man which marks the Christian. Let your instructions on these cardinal points be so simple that they can be easily understood, and so plain, if possible, that they cannot be misunderstood.

Aim to unite in your preaching, as far as possible, the *affectionate* with the *faithful*. Some, indeed, consider these qualities as altogether incompatible. But this is a great and dangerous mistake. The affectionate preacher, and he alone, is truly faithful, and to the best advantage. So thought the great and good Fenelon. Addressing himself to young ministers, he says: "Love your people; make them see and feel that you love them;

and then say to them what you please, without fear of giving them offence."

It was a shrewd and wholesome admonition of an aged minister to a young man at his ordination: "Be careful, when you enter this desk, that you do not bring *yourself* with you. You are to preach to this people the Lord Jesus Christ, in his divinity and humanity, in his person and offices, in his grace and in his glory. This is the picture you are to hold up to your people, while you stand behind it, and not let so much as your little finger be seen."

While you insist constantly on the religion of the heart, be careful to guard your hearers against a religion of mere experience and feeling. Assure them that the most confident pretensions to vital piety are delusive, and may be fatal, unless attended with the substantial fruits of piety and virtue, in the heart and life.

Let all your pulpit exhibitions be simple and chaste, dignified and impressive. *Here*, the play of the imagination, and the coruscations of a lively fancy have ordinarily no place. The poor hour we spend in the pulpit leaves not a moment to spare for the mere display of our own talents, or the amusement of our immortal and dying hearers.

If we would preach to purpose we must preach by *example*. Indeed, an eminently holy life is the best of sermons. It is also a lucid commentary on the Bible itself. It answers a thousand questions. It solves a thousand difficulties. It refutes a thousand cavils. It almost compels men to see *what religion is*, how real, how beautiful, how sublime, how heavenly. In this way we may preach the gospel every day of the week, and every hour of the day.

Such an eminence in piety involves, confessedly, much faithful self-discipline, much abstraction from the world, much watchfulness against sin and temptation; above all, much familiarity with the throne of grace. Oh, my brother! it is by daily pros-

tration of soul at the feet of our Savior, that we may hope to imbibe and exhibit his spirit, to bear his image, to copy his bright example, and exhibit the attractive and divine charms of his religion.

I will not exhort you, my brother, to let your intercourse with your ministerial and Christian brethren in this city, be stamped by Christian kindness, and Brotherly love. The course you have so long and so uniformly pursued in this place, leaves us no room to doubt what is your disposition in this respect. For myself, I have no doubt that you come among us as a peace-maker. And from this circumstance, I draw a confident persuasion regarding the peace and union of Christians here, as well as the honor and prosperity of religion.

In dispensing the ordinances of the gospel, you will, of course, take the Scriptures for your standard and your guide. In admissions to the communion of the church, you will be anxious that the feeblest and most diffident Christian shall not want the nourishment and consolation which his Savior has provided for the *lambs* as well as the sheep of his flock. While, on the other hand, you will avoid that lax and superficial procedure which tends to nourish false and dangerous hopes, to degrade religion, and to confound the holy church of Christ with the ungodly world.

You will doubtless consider the visiting of your people as an important duty. In this way you will seek acquaintance with their spiritual state, and aim to promote their spiritual profit. These attentions will be specially welcome, and specially important, in seasons of sickness and affliction. Doubtless you will be anxious, when the conscience is unusually awake, and the heart unusually tender, to press on your beloved people the claims of religion and eternity.

You may be called on occasion to assist in the ordination of other ministers of the gospel. *Here* you may sometimes find your fidelity brought to the severest test. On the faithful, or

unfaithful part taken by ministers in ordinations, much, very much, depends in regard to the purity of our churches, and the prosperity of religion, not to say its very existence. Called to act in these cases, you will, probably, consider three points as of essential moment. First, that the candidate give evidence of a pious heart. Secondly, that he have an intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures. Thirdly, that he be inflexibly determined to preach faithfully their distinguishing doctrines, however unwelcome and offensive.

Receive, my dear sir, these very imperfect details of ministerial duty. Imperfect as they are, they proceed from a heart deeply interested in your usefulness, and the spiritual profit of your beloved church—a church to which it was my privilege to devote my labors, feeble though affectionate, for a period of twenty years. It is my fervent wish and prayer, that in ministerial usefulness and success you may far transcend the most favored of your predecessors.

True ; you have no sufficiency of your own for your great work. And had you no other resource you might well sink in despondence. But *lift up your eyes to the everlasting hills* ; and rejoice that your help comes from the God who made heaven and earth. You do not doubt, a moment, that the hearts of all your dear people are in his hand. And why may you not hope that numbers here to-day, living hitherto without God in the world, may, by your pious care, be led to Christ, and ultimately to heaven, there to be your joy and crown to eternity. Is not the bare thought of this, like an air of heaven, breathing on the soul, stimulating your noblest energies, and converting all your cares and toils into a delightful recreation ?

Proceed then, my dear brother, in your great and good work, *strong in the Lord and in the power of his might*. May the grace of Jesus be ever sufficient for you. May you meet a multitude of your beloved people, at last, before the throne. In the

meantime, whatever difficulties may arise, whatever cares perplex, may your heart be richly strengthened and cheered by your Savior's voice, coming forth from the excellent glory :
" Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

THE CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE WAS GIVEN

BY REV. JOHN PIKE, OF ROWLEY.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY REV. A. G. VERMILYE, OF NEWBURYPORT.

